



Labor & Economic Briefing

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Here is a summary of headlining accomplishments from the last 30 days:

Creating New Investments & Job Opportunities

Michigan Expansions Announced: The MEDC announced recently that it has provided assistance through the Michigan Economic Growth Authority (MEGA) program to spur the expansions of several Michigan companies and assist in new brownfield redevelopment projects. The following is a summary of the new, job-creating developments:

■ **City of Detroit:** The Michigan Economic Development Corporation (MEDC) has granted brownfield tax credits to assist three redevelopment projects in the city of Detroit. The projects are expected to generate **\$55 million in private investment** and create as many as **476 new jobs**.

1. **VITEC**, a Tier One automotive supplier engaged in the design, manufacture and assembly of plastic fuel tanks, plans a \$20.6 million expansion in the Clark Street Technology Park. The project will create 26 new jobs and retain 20 positions. The tech park is the former location of the General Motors Cadillac assembly plant. This redevelopment has been approved for a Brownfield SBT credit of up to \$1 million.

2. **Huber-Manchester Investments** plans to initiate the first phase of the redevelopment of I-94 Industrial Park in Detroit. The company will build a new 300,000 square foot facility to house manufacturing service, light assembly and warehousing operations within the park. Construction will begin in December with completion expected next May. A Brownfield Single Business Tax credit of up to \$1.5 million was approved for the project, which is expected to spur \$26.5 million in private investment and create 250 new jobs.

3. **Curis Group**, a Detroit development company, is working in partnership with Eastside Land, Inc. to redevelop blighted commercial and residential properties at the corner of Mack and Alter. The new development will include a 55,000 square-foot multi-use retail center. The development company will invest \$8.5 million in the project. Future retail activity at the site could result in the creation of as many as 200 new full-time jobs. The project received approval to capture up to \$462,300 in state and local taxes to fund demolition and site preparation activities for redevelopment.

■ **Ford Motor Company:** MEDC has offered assistance to help convince Ford Motor Company to choose the Ford Wayne Assembly facilities as the location for a major product investment. Assuming final approval of the project and other tax incentives, it is estimated that Ford would **invest \$583 million** to upgrade the production facilities at Wayne to accommodate the transfer of a product line from a foreign plant. Including employees at suppliers and other businesses, **11,426 jobs** could ultimately be retained if Michigan is chosen for the expansion. The Ford Wayne site currently employs 7,029 at two assembly plants, which together produce the Focus, Expedition and Navigator models. The new project would update Focus production facilities at the Wayne site. The company has considered other international sites for this investment. It is hoped that a Single Business Tax credit offered by the MEDC worth \$48.8 million over the next 20 years will help convince Ford to choose Michigan for the expansion. The city of Wayne is also reviewing a tax abatement request valued at more than \$41.5 million for 12 years to help facilitate the project.

■ **Mercantile Bank:** A Brownfield redevelopment project will result in a new headquarters for Mercantile Bank in downtown Grand Rapids. The project is expected to generate **\$10.3 million in private investment**, and as many as **100 new jobs** may be created as a result of future growth at the site. Mercantile Bank will utilize Brownfield tax credits and tax capture valued at up to \$5 million to prepare the site for its new, 60,000 square foot headquarters. The city of Grand Rapids, through the city's Brownfield development authority, will capture more than \$1.8 million in local property taxes to assist with site preparation activities to facilitate the construction of the new headquarters.

■ **Dow Corning:** Dow Corning will combine operations currently in Florida, California and Connecticut at a **new \$21.7 million facility** in Williams Township near Midland with the help of a high-tech Single Business Tax (SBT) credit valued at \$4.5 million over 12 years. The new facility will manufacture semiconductor materials and provide research and development services to the emerging compound semiconductor industry. The project is expected to create up to **164 new jobs**.



**Governor
Jennifer M.
Granholm**

■ **Dow Corning:** Dow Corning will redevelop a Brownfield site at its Midland facility. The project is expected to generate **\$13 million in private investment** and retain up to **80 chemical manufacturing jobs**. Dow Corning plans to invest \$13 million to rehabilitate and reuse existing Midland production facilities. The plant produces phenyl-based silicone products used in various markets, including personal care and lubricants. The newly renovated facilities will help Dow Corning meet increasing global demand for these products. The MEDC awarded a brownfield Single Business Tax credit of up to \$1.3 million to help bring the facility up to current chemical manufacturing standards. The city of Midland also supported the project with a tax abatement worth \$240,000 over 12 years.

■ **Dow AgroSciences:** Dow AgroSciences will **invest \$17 million** to update a 1950s-era herbicide processing plant at Dow Chemical's Michigan Operations site. This project will retain six jobs. The MEDC has awarded a Brownfield SBT credit of up to \$1 million to help bring the obsolescent facility up to current chemical manufacturing standards. The revitalized plant will manufacture a new rice herbicide that is scheduled to be launched in 2005.

■ **General Motors:** The currently idle General Motors Nodular Iron plant in Saginaw is poised for a redevelopment that is expected to generate **\$60 million in private investment** and create **486 new jobs**. Corvus Nodular Interests LLC will develop the project to include the construction of a finishing and machining facility, assisted by Brownfield SBT credits totaling more than \$4.4 million. Upon completion, four automotive suppliers will locate within the facility, which will service and supply the existing Saginaw Metal Casting Operation.

■ **The Grand River Place, Detroit:** The Grand River Place project in Detroit will make use of a Brownfield SBT credit of up to \$1 million and tax capture of up to \$829,000 to prepare the former Federal Department Store into a multi-level retail, technology, fitness and entertainment establishment. This project is expected to create up to **125 new jobs** and spur nearly **\$13.5 million in private investment**. The new center will likely include restaurants, salons, a bank branch, specialty retail stores, a high-tech virtual reality arcade and other entertainment sites.

■ **ITW Woodworth:** Redevelopment is also planned for the former ITW Woodworth manufacturing facility in Ferndale. The project received approval to capture up to \$620,326 in state and local taxes to be used to fund demolition, lead and asbestos abatements, infrastructure improvements and site preparation for redevelopment into a self-storage facility. The project is expected to spur **\$2.8 million in private investment**.

CMS Energy Honored for New Corporate HQ Built on Former Contaminated Site: CMS Energy of Jackson was awarded a 2003 Phoenix Award for achievement of excellence in brownfield redevelopment at the National Brownfield Conference in Portland, Oregon today. The award recognizes the company for locating its new corporate headquarters in downtown Jackson on a former contaminated industrial site. Now in its eighth year, the National Brownfield Conference is the only event of its kind, co-sponsored by the Environmental Protection Agency and the International City/County Management Association. One winner is selected from each of EPA's ten regions and one project from outside the United States as an international winner. The Michigan Economic Development Corporation (MEDC) was critical in making the CMS Energy headquarters project a reality. The MEDC:

- ♦ provided a \$1 million Urban Land Assembly loan to the city of Jackson for property acquisition and demolition;
- ♦ approved \$11.9 million in tax increment financing that allowed the city to build two parking decks and make other infrastructure improvements in support of the new facility; and
- ♦ approved an \$8.6 million Brownfield Single Business Tax credit to CMS Energy to help the company with the costs of demolition, environmental cleanup and other remedial actions at the 10-acre site.

The project resulted in the consolidation of approximately 1,500 CMS Energy jobs into the downtown Jackson site, and the creation of 224 new, full-time jobs by other private firms is also expected.

Visteon Celebrates Final Beam Raising: Governor Granholm joined Visteon executives and other officials to celebrate the installation of the final steel beam in Visteon Corporation's new, one million square-foot corporate office and innovation center in Van Buren Township. The center is set to open in the second half of 2004. An incentive package offered by the MEDC in partnership with the Michigan Department of Transportation and Van Buren Township helped to facilitate the new center. Visteon had considered locating it in Toledo, Ohio, but decided on Michigan because of cost savings provided by the incentives. The project will result in the retention of 3,400 existing jobs and is expected to create up to 808 new jobs for Michigan workers over the next 13 years, including 475 directly by the company.

Infrastructure Support for Grayling: Governor Granholm announced that \$106,560 in federal Community Development Block Grant funding has been provided to the city of Grayling to facilitate the expansion of Derwich Industries, Inc. The project is expected to create **11 new manufacturing jobs** for local families. The city will use the funding to make necessary road improvements and extend water main and sewer infrastructure to facilitate the expansion.

Encouraging Economic & Urban Development

Site Selection Magazine Ranks Michigan #2 in the Nation for Its Business Friendly Climate: Michigan has been recognized as the second most business friendly state in the nation for the second year in a row, according to the November issue of Site Selection magazine. North Carolina received the top ranking, followed by Michigan, Tennessee, Ohio and Virginia (tied for fourth) and Texas. Site Selection provides expansion planning information to 45,000 executives of fast-growing firms in 117 countries. To view the complete ranking, visit Site Selection's Web site at <http://www.siteselection.com>.

Five criteria were used to determine business climate rankings:

- New plant data provided by Site Selection publisher, Conway Data, showing the total number of new and expanded corporate facilities in 2002;
- Total new and expanded facilities in 2000 and 2001;
- Total new and expanded facilities per 1 million residents for 2002;
- Total new and expanded facilities per 1,000 square miles; and
- The results of Site Selection's annual survey of corporate real estate executives that determines which states they consider to be the most pro-business.

The ranking was based 50 percent on the first four criteria and 50 percent on the executive survey.

Michigan Among Top 10 for Small Businesses: Michigan ranks 9th in the nation for best policy environment for small business and entrepreneurship, according to the Small Business Survival Committee (SBSC) of Washington, D.C. Michigan's SmartZoneSM business accelerators and Small Business Technology and Development Centers, working in partnership with the MEDC, are examples of resources that are helping entrepreneurs transform their ideas and business plans into successful companies. Michigan increased its standing from 11th overall last year in the Small Business Survival Index, an annual comparative study conducted by the SBSC that analyses 21 major government-imposed or government-related costs impacting small business. According to the index, the best policy environment for entrepreneurship and small business consists of low taxes, limited government, restrained regulation and the government's ability to maintain a low crime rate. There were more than 211,000 non-farming small businesses operating in Michigan in 2002, employing a total of over 2 million workers.

MEDC Announces New President and CEO: A nationwide search conducted by the MEDC Executive Committee culminated in the selection of Donald E. Jakeway as the new president and CEO of the Michigan Economic Development Corporation. Jakeway has more than 30 years of economic development experience at both the state and community levels. For the past six years he has been president and CEO of the Regional Growth Partnership, based in Toledo, Ohio. This private/public nonprofit development corporation is dedicated to fostering economic development and technology enhancement opportunities in the 11 northwest Ohio counties. Before heading the Growth Partnership, Jakeway served for seven years as director of the Ohio Department of Development. Under Jakeway's leadership the department was named twice as one of the top 10 development agencies in the world and the state was ranked the top state in the nation for new business expansions three years in a row, both by Site Selection magazine. Jakeway began his new role with the MEDC in October.



Donald E. Jakeway, MEDC President & CEO

Entrepreneur's Quest Launches: The 2003-04 Great Lakes Entrepreneur's Quest, sponsored by the MEDC, is kicking off with a new two-tiered, year-round structure to tailor training and business development for Michigan's entrepreneurs. Existing and potential Michigan entrepreneurs can compete in the Quest for prizes that include financial rewards and professional services vital to growing early-stage businesses. A total purse exceeding \$175,000 is available for winners of this year's Quest. Free training sessions were held at Eastern Michigan University (Sept. 29), Grand Valley State University (Sept. 30) and Michigan State University (Oct. 1). More information on the Great Lakes Entrepreneur's Quest, including competition registration, is available at <http://www.glegq.org>.

Broadband Authority Loan Expanding Service: The Michigan Broadband Development Authority (MBDA) closed on a \$510,204 loan to PCS Broadband, LLC (a fixed wireless broadband Internet service provider based in Jackson, Michigan) to expand its operations in several Michigan cities. The MBDA's loan will help PCS build the necessary infrastructure to offer their broadband service in the cities of Battle Creek, Birmingham, Brighton, Eaton Rapids, Fenton, Howell, Jackson, Kalamazoo and Lansing. PCS Broadband currently provides high-speed Internet service in Ann Arbor, Detroit, Dexter, Farmington, Livonia, Southfield and Wixom. PCS Broadband specializes in service to small and medium-sized businesses in areas where incumbent cable and/or DSL coverage is weak or non-existent. According to CIS Director David C. Hollister, high-speed Internet access is a necessity, not a luxury. "Small and medium-sized businesses are the lifeblood of our state's economic engine and we must do all we can to retain these enterprises and help them grow. This investment will help provide a key resource to such businesses in these cities," said Hollister.

Main Street Workshop Helps Communities: The MEDC held a three-day Michigan Main Street Basics 101 Workshop in East Lansing. The goal of the training and information sessions was to educate community officials about downtown revitalization methods employed by the newly developed Michigan Main Street program. Participants heard of the Main Street program and other effective state programs that have facilitated successful downtown revitalization projects. Michigan is now one of 39 states to administer a Main Street program. The next competitive round for the Main Street designation is currently underway. Letters of intent from communities are due by February 13, 2004, and the winning communities are expected to be announced in June 2004.

Fast-Growing Companies Recognized: Seventeen Michigan companies made the 2003 Inc. 500 list of fastest growing small companies, compiled each year by Inc. magazine. Four of the winners hail from the Michigan technology community. The top Michigan company was Southfield-based Human Capital, a human resources company. Human Capital ranked No. 151 with five-year sales growth of 1082 percent. Four Michigan technology companies made the list: Furniture Find, Buchanan, No. 166; Car.Com, Troy, No. 174; American Megacom, Livonia, No. 207; and Partners of Progress, Bloomfield Hills, No. 214. Michigan ranked No. 11 overall.

Governor's Manufacturing Summit Set for December 8 in Plymouth: Governor Jennifer M. Granholm announced that her Michigan Manufacturing Summit will be held on December 8 at the Michigan Manufacturing Technology Center in Plymouth. More than 35 key business and labor leaders representing the manufacturing industry are expected to join the Governor in identifying the most critical issues facing the industry and explore possible solutions. During the past three years, Michigan has lost more than 170,000 manufacturing jobs, while the nation lost more than 2.7 million. Manufacturing employs approximately one out of every five workers in Michigan. Although the number of summit participants is limited to increase the effectiveness of the discussion, Granholm emphasized that the input of many others has been gathered in preparation for the summit. As part of the Manufacturing Matters initiative, the Governor held a series of informal meetings with manufacturing leaders and workers in Traverse City, Lansing, Saginaw, Detroit and Grand Rapids. After the summit Granholm intends to rally other governors of manufacturing states to Washington to raise industry issues that must be addressed at the federal level.

Linking Culture, Community & Economy

Governor Announces "Creating Cool" Conference on Dec. 11 Featuring Best-Selling Author Richard Florida: Governor Jennifer M. Granholm announced that Dr. Richard Florida, author of *The Rise of the Creative Class* and *How It's Transforming Work, Leisure, Community and Everyday Life*, will be the featured speaker at a one-day conference entitled: *Creating Cool: Linking Culture, Community and the Economy*. "The marriage of the arts and culture with economic development is a key factor in revitalizing cities," Governor Granholm said. "This event is part of the dialogue I want to have with Michigan communities about how we create cool cities that have hot jobs and economic opportunities for younger workers. Those workers are critical to our state's future economic security." The "Creating Cool" conference will be held on Thursday, December 11, 2003 at the Lansing Center in Lansing. The conference is designed to bring together cultural, economic development, civic, and government leaders seeking creative solutions to community challenges. It is being hosted by the Michigan Council for Arts and Cultural Affairs, the Michigan Department of Consumer and Industry Services (CIS) and the Governor's office. Registration for teams of four or more attending together from a community are \$50 per person on or before November 21st and \$65 per person thereafter. The registration fees for individuals is \$70 per person on or before November 21st and \$85 thereafter. For more information, call Get Real! Communications at 734/669-4360.



Providing Career Development Resources

Career Development Continues to Support Popular FIRST Robotics Competition (PiX): The Michigan Department of Career Development (MDCD) continues to support the popular FIRST Robotics Competition. FIRST is the acronym of "For Inspiration and Recognition of Science and Technology." It was founded in 1989 by inventor Dean Kamen as a nonprofit organization to inspire an appreciation of science and technology in young people, their schools, and their communities. Kamen is the inventor of the personal transporter Segway, the portable dialysis machine, the wearable drug infusion pump, a heart stent, and the chair on wheels that can climb stairs and rise to allow its user to look someone in the eyes. The FIRST Robotics Competition is a national program that challenges high school students, working in teams with teachers, engineers, and business mentors, to design and build a robot to compete in high-intensity, spectator events that measure the effectiveness of each robot, the power of teamwork, and the students' determination. Teams typically come from almost every state, as well as from Canada, Brazil, and Great Britain. Since 2001, MDCD has partnered with FIRST through a grant that supports FIRST Robotics Competition regional events in Michigan. MDCD has committed \$350,000 (\$175,000 each for 2004 and 2005) to the FIRST Robotics Competition through May 31, 2005. The 2004 FIRST Robotics Regional Competitions scheduled in Michigan are: Great Lakes Regional Competition, Eastern Michigan University (March 11-13, 2004); Detroit Regional Competition, Wayne State University (March 18-20, 2004); and West Michigan Regional Competition, Grand Valley State University (April 1-3, 2004). For more information, visit the FIRST Web site at <http://www.usfirst.org>.



FIRST Robotics Competition

MDCD Helps Promote College Goal Sunday Office of Postsecondary Services: MDCD is collaborating with Partnership for Learning to promote College Goal Sunday, February 8, 2004, an event to assist students and their families in applying for financial aid for college. Partnership for Learning (a nationally-award-winning nonprofit organization helping schools and communities to work together to increase learning from birth through college) has received a grant from the Lumina Foundation to launch the College Goal Sunday program in Michigan. College Goal Sunday supports the mission of MDCD's GEAR UP Michigan! program, according to Mike Beamish, MDCD postsecondary education specialist and state GEAR UP Michigan! director. GEAR UP, which stands for Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs, strives to significantly increase the number of low-income students who are prepared to enter and succeed in postsecondary education. Now entering its third year, GEAR UP Michigan!, part of a U.S. Department of Education national project, is helping to serve more than 14,000 students in several school districts across Michigan. Students receive services to better equip them to go on to college. These services include academic counseling, educational development planning, after-school tutoring, career and college preparation assistance, mentoring, and financial aid workshops. Gear UP Michigan! funding also provides scholarship dollars, which are being administered by the Michigan Department of Treasury. MDCD, along with the Michigan Department of Treasury, is partnering with other state government and nonprofit organizations to work together on the College Goal Sunday program. On College Goal Sunday, February 8, from 2:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m., families will receive free help filling out financial aid forms in schools, colleges, and community centers in Ann Arbor, Battle Creek, Detroit, Flint, Grand Rapids, Kalamazoo, Lansing, Marquette, Saginaw, and Warren. Members of the Michigan Student Financial Aid Association will volunteer their time to assist with financial aid questions, and additional volunteers will assist families with filling out paperwork. As a prelude to the February 8 event, an extensive public information campaign will reach low- and middle-income families to emphasize the importance of an education beyond high school and the availability of financial aid to make it possible. First Gentleman Daniel Mulhern and University of Michigan Head Basketball Coach Tommy Amaker have volunteered to serve as celebrity spokespersons for the campaign. For more information about Gear Up Michigan! contact Mike Beamish at (517) 241-6806. For more information about College Goal Sunday or to volunteer to help families fill out forms at any of the 10 sites listed above, contact David Weil of Partnership for Learning at (517) 374-4083 or <http://www.micollegegoal.org>.



College Goal Sunday, scheduled for Feb. 8, will help Michigan students with applying for scholarship funds.

Career Schools Renew Licenses Online for First Time: The Office of Postsecondary Services has just completed the license renewal process for more than 300 career schools. For the first time, schools were able to renew their licenses online on the new Proprietary School Web site. Feedback from school owners and presidents indicates a high degree of satisfaction with the online renewal process. The schools indicate the Web site provides them a time and labor savings. This process is saving the state money as well by allowing staff to expedite the renewal process. In addition, school data are now readily available to the public. Individuals interested in attending a career school can access current information at <http://www.michiganps.net>.

Career and Technical Preparation Forum Held: The Office of Career and Technical Preparation (OCTP) held a Career and Technical Education (CTE) Teacher Preparation Forum. CTE administrators and teacher education institutions attended to provide feedback on changes that OCTP has proposed to teach certification codes and administrative rules. The changes are to ensure there are fully qualified teachers in CTE classrooms and to provide standards and guidelines so that the Michigan Department of Education (MDE) can periodically evaluate university CTE teacher preparation programs. The changes in codes and rules will hopefully provide more structure to ensure quality teachers, and provide flexibility in hiring since there is such a severe teacher shortage nationally and in Michigan for CTE teachers. The proposed rule changes are posted at <http://www.michigan.gov/mde>.

Adult Education Co-Sponsors Learning Disability Pre-Symposium: The Office of Adult Education co-sponsored a pre-symposium along with the Learning Disabilities Association (LDA) on "Assistive Technology That Works!" It shows participants how using technology can minimize the restricting effects of a learning disability. The pre-symposium was the kickoff to the LDA annual conference providing the most current information in research, education, and advocacy on learning disabilities.

Workforce Transition Section (WTS) Assists Employers and Displaced Workers: The Workforce Transition Section (WTS) responded to 19 notices of planned plant closures or mass layoffs in the last month. Contact was made with employers and union representatives in response to receipt of a Worker Adjustment and Retraining Notification (WARN) notice, letter, phone call, newspaper article, or other means of notification. A brief overview of available dislocated worker services was given, and depending on the number of jobs impacted, a formal on-site Rapid Response Team Meeting was scheduled or arrangements were made for the local Michigan Works! Agency to meet with the affected employees to provide information on available services. Other services provided:

- Conducted 10 Rapid Response Meetings with employers (and union representatives, where employees are represented by a collective bargaining agreement).
- Responded to 73 phone calls and 17 e-mails from individuals, company/union representatives, and service providers who requested information or clarification of issues related to the Worker Adjustment and Retraining Notification (WARN) Act and dislocated worker services.
- Attended three worker orientation sessions and seven Joint Adjustment Committee meetings (JAC). Joint Adjustment Committees are established to provide a more proactive, participatory response to large plant closings or mass layoffs.

Grants Issued to Help Michiganians Seeking Employment: The MDCD Workforce Programs Division issued several grants for FY 2004 to assist Michiganians seeking employment, including:

- Issued \$111,385,129 in grants to support locally-operated employment and training programs for the fiscal year just beginning (FY 2004). These grants funded Work First programs that served 100,422 Michigan public assistance recipients seeking employment and training through August 31, 2003, for the last fiscal year.

- Issued \$661,521 in grants for FY 2004 supporting the Food Assistance Employment and Training program, which helps people able to work and without dependents secure gainful employment. This program served 1,784 Michigan Food Assistance recipients in their efforts to become self-sufficient last fiscal year.

- Issued \$4,693,699 in Reed Act grants to support the locally-operated Michigan Works ! Agencies' one-stop service centers throughout Michigan. These grants help keep the one-stop service centers operating thereby giving every Michigan resident the opportunity to access the 104 Michigan Works! one-stop service centers to seek new or better employment as part of Michigan's efforts to match workforce skills to employer needs.

Michigan Rehabilitation Services Assisted 6,670 Michiganians with Disabilities Find Jobs: Michigan Rehabilitation Services (MRS) assisted a total of 6,670 Michiganians with disabilities into jobs during FY 2003. MRS operates a network of 36 field offices across the state staffed by master-degree level rehabilitation counselors. Services are individualized to each client's employment needs, and can include job training, prostheses and other medical services, job-seeking skills training, support services such as deaf interpreters, and job placement. During the fiscal year, MRS provided job-related services to a total of 46,209 Michiganians with disabilities interested in entering the job market or returning to work. In addition, MRS provided disability-related services to 2,620 employers during FY 2003. These services centered on helping businesses hire new workers and retain current employees at risk of losing their jobs because of illness or injury. MRS also assists businesses with ergonomic assessments of work sites, disability-related tax credits and deductions, and information on the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and other state and federal laws related to disability issues.

Matching Employers & Workers via the Internet

Michigan Talent Bank Receives High Marks from Users: The Michigan Talent Bank continues to receive high satisfaction ratings from both job seekers and businesses. Among job seekers, 83 percent said they are satisfied with MTB job listings. Among businesses surveyed, 97 percent indicated they would use MTB again, while 68 percent of those surveyed interviewed candidates whose resumes were posted in MTB. The Michigan Talent Bank posted 31,409 new resumes in September, a 12 percent increase over the previous month bringing the total searchable resumes to 617,537. New business registrations added: 958, which is an 8 percent increase. More than 6,600 job orders were posted bringing the total job openings posted to 18,462- an increase of 11 percent. The total number of resume searches for the month - 65,491, an increase of nearly 10,000 from the previous month.

More Than 60,000 Visitors at Michigan's Career Portal: In the month of September, 62,860 unique visitors came to Michigan's Career Portal, (<http://www.michigan.gov/careers>), an increase of nearly 8,600 over the previous month. Three new components were added: Job Search Service for Top-Management Professionals, Job Corps, and MBA Guide.

Employment Service Agency Assists in Getting Foreign-Born Workers in the Workplace: ESA processed nearly 400 prevailing wage requests in the past month, thus making it possible for Michigan businesses to employ foreign-born workers with specialized skills on a temporary basis. For businesses seeking approval to employ foreign-born workers on a permanent basis, the Alien Labor Certification Section processed 220 applications, determining that no domestic labor is available or qualified to meet these needs.

Employment Service Agency Assists Businesses With High-Risk Employees: During September and October, \$100,000 in fidelity bonds were issued by ESA to three Michigan businesses with employees who are considered high-risk for traditional bonds due to factors in their personal backgrounds. These bonds cover a six-month period.

Assisting Jobless Workers

Final Major Step Completed for Taking Jobless Claims Online: The Bureau of Workers' & Unemployment Compensation (BWUC) has completed work on the last major phase of its Internet system for filing jobless claims, which means that just about any worker who wants to file a claim online can do so. BWUC has eliminated the requirement that unemployed workers must have filed an unemployment claim within the previous 10 years in order to file through the Internet. "Our Internet-based system is now up and running properly, accepting new and reopened claims for jobless benefits," CIS Deputy Director David Plawecki said. Unemployed workers can file an unemployment claim by visiting the bureau's website at <http://www.michigan.gov/bwuc>. The website accepts claims applications weekdays from 7:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m., including holidays that fall on weekdays.

Statewide Telephone System For Taking Unemployment Claims Is Completed!: Michigan's unemployment insurance program has moved jobless workers from long unemployment lines to telephone lines when applying for unemployment benefits. "Our telephone-based system for taking unemployment claims is successfully up and running statewide," said David Plawecki, CIS Deputy Director. "Jobless workers can now dial to file by calling our special toll-free application line, or they can file through the Internet." Jobless workers can apply for unemployment benefits by dialing a special toll-free telephone number - 1-866-500-0017. Workers are required to follow a schedule when calling on Monday through Wednesday based on the last two digits of their Social Security numbers. The system is open to all callers on Thursday and Friday, between 8:00 a.m. and 4:30 p.m.

Governor's Plan Results in \$37 million in Jobless Benefits During September: Gov. Granholm's Unemployed Worker Assistance Plan, which allowed for the payment of additional federal jobless benefits and state and federal Extended Benefits (EB), resulted in jobless benefit payments totaling \$37.2 million for 124,000 weeks of unemployment in September, which was the first full month that the benefits were payable. The governor's plan, which gained overwhelming bi-partisan legislative support, made a temporary change to the Michigan's unemployment insurance law, allowing the state to use the total unemployment rate to trigger on EB and the second tier of federal Temporary Extended Unemployment Compensation.

Boosting Michigan's Tourism Industry

Travel Michigan Web Site Visits Grow: Travel Michigan's tourism promotion program continues to drive record volumes to the travel section of the MEDC's Web site. Through the end of September, the travel area of michigan.org has recorded 3.2 million user sessions, up 87% over the same period last year. This year is also the first that Travel Michigan has tracked "click-throughs" from <http://www.michigan.org> to Michigan travel industry Web sites. To date, consumers have clicked through michigan.org to industry Web sites more than 2 million times. During peak summer months, click-throughs were running at a rate of 14,000 per day. Travel Michigan reports quarterly click-through traffic to each travel industry member with a link on <http://www.michigan.org>.

Tourism Conference Success: Nearly 300 tourism industry professionals gathered in Midland in October for the 2003 Michigan Tourism Conference, produced by MEDC's Travel Michigan unit. This represented an increase in attendance of more than 100 over the 2002 event. During her keynote presentation, Gov. Granholm reaffirmed her support for this vital Michigan industry, and she announced that she will be doing a week-long tourism promotion tour of the state in the summer of 2004. A similar tour in June of 2003 generated more than 200 print and TV stories promoting Michigan tourism, coverage which would have cost more than \$400,000 if purchased as advertising. The governor also assisted in the presentation of the first-ever Travel Michigan Outstanding Achievement Awards to Wally Bronner, founder of Bronner's Christmas Wonderland in Frankenmuth, and to Steve Yencich, President and CEO of the Michigan Hotel, Motel and Resort Association. In 2002, visitors spent \$15 billion traveling in Michigan, and that visitor spending sustained 188,000 jobs and generated \$868 million in state taxes.

Making Homeownership More Affordable

MSHDA Offers \$5.7 Million in Low Income Housing Tax Credits for Lower Income Residents: Nearly 600 units of affordable rental housing will be built or renovated for modest income Michigan families, the elderly, people with disabilities, and those at risk of homelessness as a result of almost \$5.7 million in federal Low Income Housing Tax Credits approved by the Michigan State Housing Development Authority (MSHDA). Literally thousands of our lower income families and senior citizens will benefit from the housing tax credit program. In addition, these credits will also provide housing for the disabled and those at risk of homelessness. The funds were awarded in distressed areas and rural communities throughout the state. The LIHTC program also plays a key role in bolstering the state's economy through job creation. This round of housing credit awards will generate more than 83 year long jobs in construction and related trades.

Elderly Housing Development Welcomed in Ionia: MSHDA Acting Executive Director Rick Laber joined Ionia Mayor Daniel Balice, as well as representatives from the construction company, the Great Lakes Capital Fund and the Ionia Chamber of Commerce for a ribbon cutting ceremony and open house recently at Valley View apartments in Ionia, a new, low-income independent living development for seniors. The new apartments were well received and are drawing people from all over the state. Of the 39 available units, 33 are already occupied. The complex is for the elderly who are still able to live without assistance, but a lot of effort was put into convenience and safety for the residents, making it possible for them to live independently much longer.

Low Income Housing Tax Credits Offered for Benton Harbor: Nearly 200 units of affordable rental housing will be built or renovated for modest income Benton Harbor families and elderly people as a result of almost \$1.6 million in federal Low Income Housing Tax Credits approved by the Michigan State Housing Development Authority (MSHDA). Brunson Hill Homes, to be built with \$769,329 in tax credits, will have 48 units for families. River Terrace Apartments will receive \$798,185 in tax credits and will provide 150 units of renovated rental housing for the elderly.

Promoting Energy-Efficiency and Protecting the Environment

General Motors Lansing Regional Stamping Plant for Environmental Achievement: Michigan Department of Environmental Quality Director Steven E. Chester, who was joined by CIS Director David C. Hollister, announced that the General Motors Lansing Regional Stamping plant has earned the distinction of becoming Michigan's 72nd Clean Corporate Citizen. It is the first GM facility in Lansing and the sixth overall to receive such designation. To qualify for a Clean Corporate Citizen designation, candidates must adopt a facility-specific environmental management system and active pollution prevention initiatives, and have a consistent record of compliance with applicable environmental requirements. Clean Corporate Citizens are eligible for certain regulatory benefits under the state's environmental programs, including expedited permit approval. The program is open to establishments regulated under any of Michigan's environmental statutes. Designations are valid for one year and must be renewed annually. "This designation for GM's LRS plant is evidence that manufacturers can protect the environment while at the same time keeping their competitive advantage. By participating in the Clean Corporate Citizen program, GM is also investing in our state's future since it's Michigan's unrivaled environment, coupled with our quality of life and competitive business climate that makes Michigan so attractive to our corporate partners and their employees," said Hollister, CIS Director and former Lansing mayor.

MPSC Kicks Off Be WinterWise Campaign to Alert Public to Higher Natural Gas Prices, Provides Tips to Lower Bills: The Michigan Public Service Commission (MPSC) kicked off of its "Be WinterWise" campaign to highlight the increase in natural gas prices, what customers can do to lower their bills, and financial assistance available to those who qualify. The WinterWise campaign is designed to do three things: increase public awareness about higher prices; provide practical suggestions on how to reduce bills; and publicize the financial assistance programs. Tips to reducing heating bills, include lowering thermostats or installing a programmable thermostat that automatically lowers temperatures at night and when no one is home; cleaning or replacing furnace filters; and caulking and weather-stripping around doors and windows.

Assistance for low-income people include:

- Utilities have budget payment plans.
 - Winter protection plans, created by the MPSC and administered by utilities, are available for senior citizens aged 65 and older, people receiving assistance from the Family Independence Agency or people with incomes below 150 percent of the poverty level.
 - The Michigan Home Heating Credit from the Michigan Department of Treasury. Forms will be available online on Jan. 2, 2004 at <http://www.michigan.gov/treasury> and in public offices after Feb. 1, 2004.
 - Local Family Independence Agency offices administer a State Emergency Relief Program and The Internal Revenue Service offers an Earned Income Credit on federal tax forms.
 - The MPSC offers low-income and energy efficiency grants to agencies that offer help to those who qualify.
- For more conservation tips, visit: <http://www.michigan.gov/bewinterwise>.

Energy Performance Contract Produces Cost Savings of Nearly \$1 Million at Military & Veterans Affairs: The CIS Energy Office assisted the Department of Military & Veterans Affairs (DMVA) with reducing its energy bills by \$956,862 to date. The energy upgrades were financed and installed from an innovative, but proven, approach called energy performance contracting. The Energy Office provided assistance in the contracting and monitoring process. DMVA contracted with Honeywell, Inc. in 1998 to provide energy efficiency upgrades and services at eight of their facilities, including several armories, through an energy performance contract. Dollars that would otherwise have gone to pay utility bills were invested in the DMVA project to generate energy cost savings during the first three years of a 10-year contract. Efficiency improvements included an upgrade to the heating, ventilation, air conditioning and lighting systems along with the new temperature controls and building envelope improvements. The State of Michigan has implemented energy performance contracts for several of its departments including Corrections, Community Health and Management & Budget. The State of Michigan has implemented nine energy performance contracts since 1991. Over the term of these contracts, the state expects to save more than \$21.2 million in energy costs. For more information, visit <http://www.michigan.gov/energyoffice>.

Protecting Michigan Consumers

MPSC Releases Blackout Report, Calls for Congress to Mandate Reliability Standards: The Michigan Public Service Commission (MPSC) released its report (available at <http://michigan.gov/blackout>) on the August 14 blackout. The MPSC launched its investigation into the blackout on August 18 which affected six million Michiganians. The MPSC's investigation focused on, from Michigan's point of view, what caused the blackout and how Michigan's utilities and transmission operators reacted both to the outage and to the events preceding it. It also focused on the utilities' efforts to restore power following the blackout, as well as recommendations. The joint U.S.-Canada taskforce was charged with finding the so-called "root cause" of the blackout. MPSC Chairman Peter Lark said, "As a result of this investigation, my fellow commissioners and I have reached a number of conclusions and have a number of recommendations. Adoption of these recommendations will go a long way toward preventing future outages and will inject a needed dose of accountability into the system." The current voluntary reliability standards are inadequate to protect Michigan, or the nation's citizens. Therefore, the MPSC recommended that Congress pass legislation that reposes authority and responsibility over the nation's electric transmission in the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC). FERC must be empowered to, where necessary, order membership into a Regional Transmission Organization (RTO). In the Upper Midwest, a single RTO is necessary.

Protecting Health Care Services for Michigan Citizens

Consumers Can Now File Nursing Home and Health Facility Complaints Via the Internet: Citizens can now use the Internet to file complaints against nursing homes, hospitals and other health facilities regulated by the Bureau of Health Systems. Anyone who wishes to file a complaint with the State of Michigan can file on-line at <http://www.cis.state.mi.us/fhs/complaints/onlineform.htm>. For those who don't wish to submit their complaint online, they can print off the form from the website and submit it via mail or fax. The Bureau of Health Systems Complaint Investigation Unit receives and processes consumer complaints against nursing homes, home health agencies, hospices, hospitals, freestanding surgical units, ambulatory surgical units, and end-stage renal dialysis centers.

State of Michigan Makes Nursing Applications Available Online to Help Address Nursing Shortage: Nursing applications are now available via the Internet on the Michigan Department of Consumer & Industry Services (CIS) website. The direct link is http://www.michigan.gov/cis/0,1607,7-154-10568_17671_17682---,00.html. Nursing is the largest medical occupation in the state with CIS currently licensing 114,123 RNs, 4,648 Nurse Specialists, and 27,319 LPNs. However, nurses continue to be in high demand in hospitals, care facilities and medical offices across the state. "This new nursing licensure website isn't only geared toward new licensees, but offers easy-to-access application materials for nurses interested in rejoining the nursing workforce or moving to Michigan from other states or countries," Hollister said. "We are exploring every avenue at filling the demand for highly-skilled nurses in our state. For example, Michigan offers temporary license applications to Canadian nurses so they can cross the border to provide quality health care to our consumers without having to cut through bureaucratic red tape." Hollister said CIS has undertaken several efforts in recent years to address the nursing shortage including a groundbreaking nursing workforce study that documents nurse staffing challenges in Michigan, Board of Nursing-endorsed and funded nurse scholarships, and providing funding for two integrated web-based systems (<http://www.nurseicon.org> and <http://www.mihott.com>) that help promote nursing and health careers. Applications for other health professionals can be viewed at <http://www.michigan.gov/healthlicense>.

CIS Presents \$10,000 in Nursing Scholarships to Michigan State University and Monroe County Community College: CIS presented a total of \$10,000 to the Michigan State University School of Nursing and the Monroe County Community College Department of Nursing in the latest round of nursing scholarships. The university and college are each receiving a \$5,000 nursing scholarship grant as part of a program initiated in 2000 by CIS to address a national shortage in the nursing profession. The Michigan Board of Nursing, a CIS board of health professionals and public members, proposed a scholarship fund after it determined a need for nursing professionals based on state and national health data. The program is expected to provide more than \$200,000 in scholarships this fiscal year for students pursuing an associate's or bachelor's degree to become a registered nurse.

Protecting the Safety of Michigan Workers

CIS Presents Pall Life Sciences with Bronze Award for Outstanding Safety and Health Record: Pall Life Sciences of Ann Arbor received the Consultation Education and Training Bronze Award for an outstanding safety and health record. The Consultation Education and Training (CET) Division of the CIS Bureau of Safety and Regulation recognizes the safety and health achievements of Michigan employers and employees through CET Awards, which are based on excellent safety and health performance. The CET Bronze Award recognizes leadership and commitment to workplace safety and health resulting in significant improvement of their Michigan Occupational Safety and Health Act (MIOSHA) record. Some of Pall Life Sciences safety accomplishments over the past three years include: 50 percent reduction in recordable injuries, 92 percent reduction in total lost work days due to injury, and 74 percent reduction in restricted work days due to injury. One program that has helped increase their safety awareness is an internal auditing program. Pall Corporation has 14 other U.S. manufacturing sites. Health and safety professionals from each of these sites visit other Pall facilities once a year to do a wall-to-wall safety compliance audit. This internal Pall safety network addresses many safety issues that may be shared by more than one site. Pall Life Sciences, a division of Pall Corporation, develops and manufactures filtration and separations products used in laboratory research, healthcare, diagnostic tests, and industrial applications. They employ 500 workers, and operate three manufacturing shifts.

State Gives Ergonomic Innovation Award to Tenneco Automotive's Litchfield Plant: Tenneco Automotive's Litchfield plant received the Ergonomic Innovation Award from the CIS Bureau of Safety & Regulation Consultation Education & Training (CET) Division for innovative ideas that have been implemented to reduce worker strain. The award was presented to the two active employee teams, the Ergonomics Team and the Litchfield Employees Accident Prevention System Team (LEAPS). Both teams played a major role in improving the Litchfield safety performance and were instrumental in the facility receiving the Ergonomic Innovation Award. The Ergonomics Team focuses on evaluating positions in plant work cells and implementing ergonomic safety practices. The LEAPS Team, along with employee observers, spearheads the behavior-based safety process and obtains feedback from employees about areas needing improvement. Their ergonomic efforts were initiated to protect their employees, but the company realized the added bonus of increased productivity. The Litchfield facility is a Tier 1 manufacturer of exhaust assemblies and employs approximately 400 workers. Since 1998 they have made significant ergonomic improvements, including the use of different types of list assist devices throughout the production line, to dramatically decrease manual lifting. They have also designed and modified workstations with adjustable worktables to reduce worker strains. Along with these improvements, the facility is using job rotation to reduce overexertion injuries.